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ABSTRACT

The projects, goals, and purposes of the International Extension College are presented in this second annual report. According to this report, the purposes of the organization are the facilitation of nonformal education in the Third World using three-way teaching--the integrated use of correspondence, broadcasting, and face-to-face tuition. The major project reported as implementing these goals is the Mauritius College of the Air. The development and operation of this extension college is described. Other smaller or less-developed projects in Botswana, Lesotho, Nigeria, other African countries, and Bangladesh are reported. The activities of the home office in England to provide information, training, and research are described. The philosophy and general goals of the organization conclude the report. (SH)

Second Annual Report

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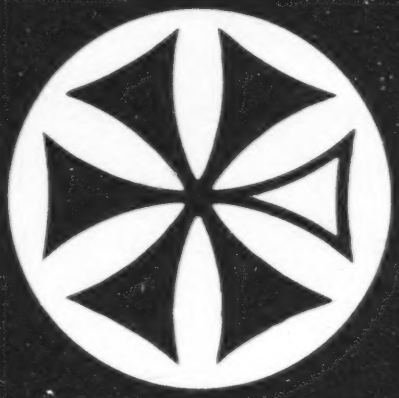

International
Extension
College

ED 093302

THE INTERNATIONAL EXTENSION COLLEGE, 1972-1973

Hilary Perraton, Tony Dodds, Michael Young

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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International Extension College 1973

The International Extension College

The International Extension College is a non-profit organisation, registered as an educational charity under British law. Its purpose is to make available services, advice and information on distance teaching, when invited to do so, throughout the developing world. It was founded in 1971 and is now beginning to set up projects which integrate the use of correspondence lessons, broadcasts and face-to-face teaching, and to provide an information service about this pattern of education.

The idea of an international college grew out of the work of the National Extension College, which has been doing three-way teaching in Britain since 1963. Both Colleges were founded by Dr Michael Young, now Chairman of the International Extension College.

Dr Michael Young has been Director of the Institute of Community Studies since 1957. He is also President of the Consumers Association, Chairman of the Advisory Centre for Education and was the first chairman of the National Extension College. For three years he was the first chairman of the Social Science Research Council.

The co-directors of the International Extension College are Tony Dodds, Hilary Perraton and Peter Kinyanjui. Before coming to the College in 1971 Mr Dodds was for seven years a tutor – for the last three as radio tutor – at the Institute of Adult Education at the University of Dar es Salaam. Mr Perraton was on the staff of the National Extension College from 1964 onwards, first as its educational director and then as director of the Inter-University Research Unit. Mr Kinyanjui is on secondment from the University of Nairobi where he has been Head of the Correspondence Course Unit. He is also Chairman of the African Association for Correspondence Education and a Vice-President of the International Council on Correspondence Education.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

In IEC's first report *One Year's Work*, we tried to define the kind of institution we were setting up and what its objectives were. Most of what we said there stands, but it is appropriate to begin this report roughly where the last one ended, with the definition of our particular interests.

We set up the IEC with two related ideas. The first was to see whether the use of three-way teaching – the integrated use of correspondence, broadcasting and face-to-face tuition – could, as we believed, be of special value in meeting educational needs in the Third World. We knew from experience in this country of the potency of the three-way mixture. The enquiries and approaches made to us from the developing world, and our knowledge of what was happening there, confirmed that the same mixture could work elsewhere. The second idea lay not in the realm of techniques but of philosophy. Much of what we had seen and read showed dramatically how traditional education systems based on European curricula and examinations and school systems, were failing to meet the real educational needs of the Third World. Our analysis here was not new but followed the work of educators like Dumont, Illich, Freire and Coombs. And so our central concern has been to see whether the techniques of three-way teaching can be used in non-formal education closely geared to real educational needs. While this was our central interest, we did not see it as a limiting one and inevitably some of our activities have looked nearly as traditional and orthodox as much that happens within schools throughout much of the world.

We did not want our work to be an academic exercise but something more in the realm of action research. We have been able to do this largely as a result of a generous grant from the Ford Foundation, who have taken a keen interest in our work from the beginning, and from whom we have received support in many ways. We have tried to do things in three ways. First, by setting up new colleges overseas where asked to do so. Inevitably, our largest single preoccupation over the last year has been with our first daughter college – the Mauritius College of the Air – whose early development is described in the following chapter. But apart from this, the newly established Botswana Extension College is looming large, and similar projects are afoot in Lesotho and Nigeria. A fuller description of these activities will form the major part of this report.

Our second sphere of activity has been the provision of support and information services and advice, not only to our overseas colleges but also to anybody requesting such a service. Training workshops directed by IEC staff and the provision of specialist advice on particular problems, fall into this category. So do the varied services provided to the newly-formed African Association for Correspondence Education, in preparation for their founding conference in Nairobi which took place in June 1973. And thirdly, we are in the process of setting up a resource centre in Cambridge, as a base from which to plan and to inform ourselves and others working in the same field.

IEC's status is that of a non-profit organisation, registered as an educational charity under British law. It has shared offices since its foundation in 1971 with the National Extension College in Cambridge and the Institute of Community Studies in London. We have been able to start work as a result of generous donations from the Ford Foundation, the Wates Foundation, War on Want and the Elmgrant Trust. The Mauritius College of the Air is separately financed by a group of British charities linked through the Voluntary Committee on Overseas Aid and Development (VCOAD) – Christian Aid, Hilden Charitable Trust, Freedom from Hunger, Oxfam, United Nations Association and War on Want.

This short report aims at sketching out how far we have got got, with their support, in developing and supporting three-way teaching.

Chapter 2: THE MAURITIUS COLLEGE OF THE AIR

When we were developing the idea of an International Extension College, Michael Young made a number of visits to Mauritius to discuss the possibility of launching a college there. The idea drew a warm response from the Mauritian Government and in December 1971 the Mauritius College of the Air Act formally established the College. Michael Young went to the island to direct the College for its first six months in May 1972; it was inaugurated on television by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam on 28th August; the first pilot course began in November while the College actually took the air and put out its first broadcasts at ten past two on the afternoon of 5th February 1973. In the meantime the College established a Mauritian board of trustees and recruited staff to man the College and write its first courses. At the time of writing (July 1973) we still have two expatriate staff seconded to the College but we anticipate that, within a matter of months, all the staff will be Mauritian.

Why Mauritius?

We have sometimes been asked – with an air of surprised incredulity – why we chose to establish a college in Mauritius. There are two main answers. The first is the simple one that the Mauritian Government asked us to. But, beyond that, we believed that a project in Mauritius could have relevance far beyond the confines of its own crowded square miles. For the problems we, and the Mauritian people, are up against are a sort of microcosm of the educational problems of the Third World. First, it is suffering economically from dependence on a single crop – sugar – which is a primary product, readily available from many other sources including the prosperous sugar beet farmers of Western Europe. Second, its population pressure is as heavy as anywhere in the world with the possible exception of Bangladesh. And third, its educational and linguistic situation shows the ravages of its mixed colonial past.

A generation ago, as Mauritius was edging its way towards independence, its primary school system was expanded so that now something like 90% of children attend primary school. But, in a poor country, there are seldom enough resources to expand secondary education as rapidly as the output from primary schools. As a result, while a fortunate handful of Mauritian children get a good, if over-orthodox, secondary education in the government, or government-aided, secondary schools, most are forced to go from their primary schools into private secondary schools or 'mushroom colleges' which mushroomed their way into existence as more and more children wanted some chance of a secondary education. The quality of the private secondary schools varies from the reasonable to the appalling but even the best tend to teach an old-fashioned curriculum and to do so in an old-fashioned way. Qualified staff are the exception: you can read

advertisements for school certificate holders in the newspaper almost every day to take up jobs as secondary school teachers.

One of our aims at MCA, therefore, has been to help improve the quality and relevance of the teaching and learning going on in the private secondary schools, and so to offer a better chance to the children whose only hope of secondary education they represent. We hope to improve their standard of teaching by supporting their often ill-qualified teachers with better tools to do their jobs and with continuing advice on how to use the tools; we are trying to switch the emphasis of what they are doing from the irrelevant to the relevant – from medieval history, British constitution, religious knowledge or French literature to human and social biology, agricultural science and woodwork – by offering courses which we hope we can prove will be successful only in those subjects which are related directly to the lives most of the children will have to live. As a result much of the effort of the MCA – and of the IEC in its support of MCA – during its first year has been devoted to courses for use in schools, but which can also be used outside schools for children, or adults, who never were or are no longer at secondary school. In addition, however, we have begun some courses aimed directly at adults and geared directly to jobs. Thus our first course on office management was planned jointly with the Development Works Corporation, a parastatal body whose function is to carry out public works – road building, school building, mixed farming projects etc – with previously unemployed labour; similarly their clerical staff are drawn from the more highly-qualified unemployed, and the MCA's office management course, which was run together with the University of Mauritius, was aimed at providing senior clerical staff with in-service training. Another course, launched at the request of the Ministry of Education, was to upgrade primary school teachers in modern mathematics so that they could cope with the newly-introduced modern maths curricula in their schools.

The details of these courses and of the Mauritian situation are unique to the island. But the problems are common ones: if we find hints towards their solution in the bilingual island of Mauritius they may be relevant to other parts of francophone and anglophone Africa or indeed more widely in the developing world.

MCA's six principles

It is in the early stages of institution-building that one has the greatest freedom. And so it was appropriate that, in MCA's first six months, six principles were worked out with the College's trustees which we hoped would guide its work. As they are central to this account, and may be relevant elsewhere, we quote them in full here.

> 'The courses provided by MCA must take account of the educational history of Mauritius and the assumptions that people make as a result of that history. The examination system and the prestige of the Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate are, for example, part of that history and MCA must accommodate itself to them if it is to succeed. To be accepted it must show that it can provide courses of value to School Certificate pupils and if it

can do that job well the goodwill generated can be used to underpin non-traditional courses as well. Hence the proposal that a major effort in 1973 should be devoted to School Certificate courses.

'The counterpart to the first principle about the past is that the courses of MCA should be relevant to the future needs of Mauritius. There have been attempts before in the island to put more emphasis on commercial, technical and agricultural education. Ramesh Ramdoyal in his thesis, *A critical study of the development of education in Mauritius*, has pointed out that it was first tried in the 1890s and that by the time the Ward Report in much more trenchant terms proposed the same switch-over to technical education in 1944 no perceptible progress to this end had been achieved. These failures should provide warnings against any tendency to be too sanguine about what can be done in the next decade. But the attempt, as the Development Plan asserted, has to be made again. The MCA must lean its weight to such an attempt and vocational education, whether technical, agricultural or social, should form a major part of its programme. This can be done both by extracting the utmost practical value from School Certificate and by providing totally new courses at various educational levels.

'The third principle is that MCA should seek to supplement what is being done at the moment with relatively inadequate resources, and not try to repeat anything which is being done which is of already high quality. It would be folly to duplicate what is being done, for instance, at the Royal Colleges (the principal state secondary schools) or at the University. It also follows that special attention should be given by the MCA to the poorest rural areas and Rodrigues, and to the least well-endowed schools.

'The fourth principle is that the build-up should be gradual. All of us connected with MCA have a great deal to learn and need time to make the inevitable mistakes and to recover from them while operations are on a relatively small scale before the College takes a more decided shape; time will also be needed to build up the necessary networks of relationships with the Government, with the Mauritius Broadcasting Commission, with Government and Private Schools, with the University and with employers, and to create and get into good working order the fairly complex administrative system that a three-way teaching college requires. Hence the proposal that 1973, as the first full year, should be devoted to a pilot project with a large number of options deliberately left open.

'The fifth principle is that there should from the beginning be a variety of different courses; they should try out different combinations of our three teaching methods; and they should have different purposes and be aimed at different audiences. With variety there is a better chance of having some successes which will serve as growing points for the future.

'The sixth principle is that the staff of the MCA should wherever possible measure their successes and failures by systematic recording and research. The full costs will need to be assessed and related to the 'output' in terms of qualified people by three-way teaching (and various elements in it) as compared with other methods of teaching. The characteristics of the people

who do relatively well and badly with these new methods also need to be noted. The MCA can only be regarded as an experiment conducted for the sake of other developing countries, as well as for Mauritius, if a full record can be published internationally of its achievements and shortcomings.'

The first courses

It was in the light of these principles that the first courses to be written were chosen. Two were mainly for schools: a course in English to prepare students for school certificate or 'O' level in English language with special reference to technical and job-related uses of the language, and a course in human and social biology. The television series for this latter course was designed both to cover the ground of the formal syllabus and to relate teaching about human biology to actual health conditions in Mauritius. Thus the English language course consists of a correspondence course, a radio series, a television series and in-school, classroom lessons; the human and social biology course does not include a radio series but does include, where required, an experiments kit to enable schools without proper laboratories to carry out practical exercises. Both television series, it is hoped, have a wider and more general appeal than to the students who are following the complete course. The third course was also related to the work of the schools but in a more indirect way: it was on modern mathematics and designed for primary school teachers. Its aim was twofold: to teach the teachers about the subject itself and also to help them teach their own pupils. It was based on a course on modern mathematics designed by the National Extension College in England but added to it was a supplementary course on the teaching of modern maths in Mauritian primary schools. The latter was written in Mauritius and had as its particular aim to help students with their own teaching.

A course on the principles and practice of office organisation was written by a member of the University of Mauritius staff in the light of his experience of teaching the subject there, and of comparable course material from other parts of the world collected by IEC's resource centre for this purpose. The course was launched with a trial group of sixty-four employees of the Development Works Corporation and linked with a face-to-face course at the University. After this first trial has been completed and evaluated it is intended to make the course available to other public corporations, government departments and industrial concerns.

Beyond these, one course has been developed which capitalises on the expertise of one member of our staff and is designed to make money, as well as meet a need. (All the others are, in effect, subsidised.) This is a course in Mauritian Creole – the lingua franca of the island – designed to help foreign advisers and volunteers. Many of them spend only a limited period of time in Mauritius but find that their effectiveness is severely curtailed by their inability to speak the language. Philip Baker, our consultant who has lengthy experience of research into Mauritian Creole, has written the course which uses correspondence lessons and cassette tape recordings. The cost of the course to students is fixed so that, even with comparatively few students, the income from it will more than cover the costs. We hope, too, to learn something from it of the appropriate use of cassette recordings alongside broadcasts, or as an alternative to them.

Finally we have been involved in discussions with various ministry information services – health education, family planning, agricultural extension and rural reconstruction units – about ways in which distance-teaching methods can be used to support their over-stretched networks of village extension officers and to make more effective and more widely available the information and advice they are trying to offer to people living in rural areas. It is hoped that various co-operative experiments can be launched making use of radio or tele-forums in which groups of villagers will meet, listen to and discuss the broadcasts, and will have access to more detailed and permanent information through simple correspondence booklets. Questionnaires included with each booklet will enable forums to send their reactions, questions, problems and reports to the MCA (and through MCA to the experts concerned) and will enable both MCA and the experts to assess how far the information has been correctly understood. The first such experiment will be on the subject of population and family economics, and we hope that later subjects related to self-help agriculture and home affairs will be worked out. In any such experiments the MCA's role will be to help to devise suitable teaching tools; the content and the follow-up will remain the responsibility of the information agency concerned.

Starting work

The idea of combining different ways of teaching is central to what we are trying to do. And it determined much of the planning in the College's first year of work. First, the two school courses were designed with weekly television and radio broadcasts so that co-operation with the Mauritius Broadcasting Commission was crucial. All MCA programmes are being produced and transmitted by MBC at no cost to the MCA itself. Detailed preparations of all programmes are carried out in advance by MCA staff, and MCA broadcasting officers liaise and co-operate with a regular MBC production team. Regular recording times, suitable both to MBC and MCA, are made available. In order to provide these services MBC has been voted a special supplementary grant from government earmarked exclusively for MCA programmes.

Beyond this we were also fortunate in being able to recruit to the MCA staff tutors with experience of broadcasting as well as of the subject they were to teach. We were also greatly helped and encouraged by government agreement to second staff from the teaching service to MCA.

The timetable was inevitably tight, and this is not the place for a discussion of the minutiae of planning and setting up a college. Once key staff had been appointed, four major issues dominated our work. First, we had to train the staff and start the writing and development of courses. A five-week training seminar on course planning and writing was arranged in September and October 1972. The aim of the seminar was to draw on IEC's knowledge of parallel work elsewhere, and to get the course writers started on their work using the various elements of a three-way teaching system, and Hilary Perraton came out from Cambridge to conduct the workshop. Secondly, we had to set up an administrative and record system which would both be efficient and provide the information which was needed to gauge the successes and failures. For evaluation and research was the third major

concern. One of the basic justifications for establishing IEC's first daughter college in Mauritius was the fact that the island's size made it easier to study experiments than it would be in most of the vast countries of Africa or Asia. Fourthly, it was essential that MCA should build up a close working relationship with the schools which were to use its courses. One of the tutors has acted as schools liaison officer in order to help in this, and considerable time and energies went into ensuring that the schools knew what we were trying to do, and also on the practical level, in ensuring that radio and television receivers were available so that they could use the broadcasts.

Where next?

This is necessarily an incomplete account written when the College has been functioning for only a very short period of time. We hope in later reports to fill out the detail and see what direction the College is taking after this first, modest beginning.

Chapter 3: MEANWHILE IN THE REST OF THE WORLD

The shift of focus from Mauritius to the rest of the world is immense; inevitably this chapter is more sketchy, hesitant and untidy than the last. For, beyond Mauritius, we were over the last year trying to define our role, and to discover the areas where we ought to work. It is appropriate to begin in Botswana, as the Botswana Extension College is to be our second daughter college, after the Mauritius College of the Air.

Botswana

The Botswana Government has used correspondence with radio for upgrading primary school teachers since 1968 in a project designed to end in 1975. By 1970, when Michael Young first visited the country for preliminary discussions about the use of three-way teaching, it was clear that there was a case for a more permanent institution within Botswana, with broader functions than the upgrading of teachers. In a huge country, with a small and scattered population, and with a host of inherited educational problems the case for a new approach to education is not hard to make. Furthermore the Botswana Government's firm commitment to rural development as a national priority means that there is ready support for non-formal and rural education.

But a number of plans for a three-way teaching institution, drawn up between 1970 and 1972 came to nothing, partly because they were designed on too large a scale. Following a further visit to the country in November 1972, we therefore drew up a more modest plan, for a two year pilot project which would have two aims. First, it would try to meet some of the educational needs of the country by running a limited number of courses; secondly it would try to define, in the light of its success or failure with those courses, the kind of permanent institution appropriate to Botswana. This plan assumed that two expatriate advisers would be seconded from IEC to Botswana. The approach proved acceptable both to the Botswana Government and to the Ford Foundation — which had financed Michael Young's visit there in November 1972 — and at the time of writing the College is about to be launched, in association with the Botswana Ministry of Education and with backing from the Ford Foundation.

In its first couple of years it will try to do three things. First will be a rural education project which attempts to base three-way teaching on community needs rather than on a formal curriculum. This may well follow the model of courses developed in West Africa by INADES, but its precise design must await development work within Botswana. The hope is to try out ideas of non-formal education in a pilot area to see how three-way techniques can be used there, and then, if successful, to spread the project to other parts of the country. There are parallels here, of course, with the experiments in rural education which are being worked out for Mauritius. Second, Botswana is developing and changing fast and

people within and outside government service throughout the country are facing new and difficult demands: there is a clear need for in-service courses, not only for teachers, but also for agricultural extension agents and educators of all kinds, policemen, district council members and officials and others. In its first phase the Botswana Extension College will select one or two of these groups and, with the appropriate government department, seek to develop courses for them. Third, Botswana today faces a serious shortage of middle level manpower but cannot quickly meet this by expanding its secondary schools: there is therefore a need and a demand for alternatives to secondary education. At present that demand is being met mainly by commercial correspondence colleges in South Africa, the quality of whose work is severely criticised by the Botswana Government. And so, the Botswana Extension College will offer some secondary level courses. It may commission and write these itself, or it may be able to work with colleges elsewhere in Africa to adapt materials already in existence.

Thus, the strategy for the Botswana Extension College has been worked out in discussion between the Botswana Government and IEC. An account of the tactics must wait till the next report.

Lesotho

In July 1973 Michael Young, in his capacity as Chairman of IEC, paid a visit to Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland at the request of the BLS Correspondence Committee (see reference to the Committee on page 16). His brief was to draw up a report on the educational needs of the three countries and to suggest ways of meeting them. This co-operative link between IEC and the Committee has resulted, amongst other things, in a proposal which has been accepted in principle to set up in Lesotho an institution using the multi-media approach and having aims broadly similar to those of the Botswana Extension College.

Lesotho's latest National Plan (1970) formulated its objective in educational policy as being

> 'To gear the development of the education system to the requirements of manpower for economic development by lessening the academic bias of the system, and putting more emphasis on the teaching of science and mathematics.'

In accord with this aim, the proposed college will try to concentrate its resources on examination subjects of a basic or practical nature and on education for rural development. It is too early to say, however, the precise form which these activities will take.

Nigeria

Nigeria is remarkable in being one of the few large African countries which has not yet developed a government or university correspondence unit on any significant scale. At the same time, it is a country where correspondence study is widely used and where commercial correspondence colleges – both African and British –

flourish. At IEC we have had a number of contacts with Nigeria and begun to discuss the possibility of launching a correspondence teaching project there.

In our first year we worked with the Department of Adult Education at the University of Ibadan to develop some materials for science teaching. These have been used in classes run by the University. As a result of that contact we were invited, early in 1972, to do a feasibility study for the University on the establishment of a distance-teaching unit, to be based at the University and to serve Nigeria generally. Hilary Perraton therefore visited Nigeria in May 1972 and drew up recommendations for a unit which would use correspondence and radio linked with vacation courses, focusing mainly, to start with, on teacher education at primary level. The future of that plan now rests with the University and with the Nigerian Federal Government; although the Nigerian decision to go for full primary education by 1976 gives the task of teacher training a new urgency, a final decision has yet to be made on the best strategy for meeting the country's needs in the field of primary education and teacher training.

A further visit to Nigeria took place in the summer of 1973, whose purpose was partly to keep abreast of developments in the country generally and also to discuss with the Ahmadu Bello University at Zaria the possibility of working with them on their 'university of the air' project, which has begun on a modest scale and which they now plan to expand. As a result of this visit, IEC has agreed to second an expert to Zaria who will see the proposed expansion through its initial stages.

Bangladesh

In our first report we mentioned the attempts made to start a radio education project for the Bangladesh Government in exile – attempts that were overtaken by the war. Discussions with the Government have continued about launching a college within Bangladesh whose main focus of activity would be on rural education and development. The Vice-Chairman of our sister organisation, the National Extension College, Brian Jackson, visited Bangladesh on our behalf on his return from Australia, and further discussions took place during a visit to Bangladesh by Mr. Donald Chesworth, Chairman of War on Want and an IEC Trustee. These preparatory talks resulted in a visit to Mauritius in June 1973 by Dr. Mohammed Selim, Director of the Institute of Education and Research at the University of Dacca, in which he was able to observe at first hand the operation of the Mauritius College of the Air. Following this visit, a report on the possible development of a similar unit in Bangladesh with IEC help was prepared and is currently under consideration by University of Dacca authorities.

Other projects

Thus, in these areas, we continued through 1972/73 to pursue the possibility of launching new colleges, in association with local organisations. But, apart from launching daughter colleges, it has, throughout, been our intention to provide supporting services for others working in three-way teaching.

In our first report we described the moves to set up an African Association for Correspondence Education and our links with them. In our second year this project moved ahead and resulted in the Association being formally established at

a founding conference in Nairobi early in June 1973. From September 1972 the Economic Commission for Africa was able to provide an informal secretariat for the incipient association so that we were left with two limited functions. First we continued to build up a small collection of resources – information about three-way teaching, copies of reports and courses and the like – to be made over to the Association on its foundation. Second, we saw through the press a book based on the Abidjan 1971 seminar on correspondence education, edited by Antoine Kabwasa and Martin Kaunda on behalf of the Association. The book, *Correspondence Education in Africa*, published by Routledge and Kegan Paul in 1973, consists partly of an edited version of the seminar proceedings and partly of a survey of correspondence education in Africa, completed by IEC for the Association.

Finally, now that the Association is launched with its own base, and serving francophone as well as anglophone Africa, it is appropriate that one of the senior tutors of the Mauritius College of the Air has become the first honorary secretary of the Association. The Association hopes to carry out a survey of commercial correspondence colleges operating in Africa, and IEC has been asked to assist in this exercise.

Elsewhere in Africa too, we were asked to provide services. In Ethiopa, the Extension Division of Haile Selassie I University has, for some years, been working towards the introduction of correspondence studies. Early in 1973 the University, with the Ministry of Education, took the decision to begin a programme of correspondence courses and asked IEC to set up a training workshop for its course writers. Hilary Perraton went there in March to conduct the workshop. The courses planned by the University were of three kinds: one group were for the upgrading of primary school teachers; a second were at the level of secondary school examinations while the third, represented by a course for rural health workers, were more concerned with non-formal education. The University had made the decision that, rather than wait till an administrative unit for correspondence studies had been established, they should start course writers on the development and writing of the courses straight away. Inevitably this meant that the workshop became a planning and writing activity, designed as the starting phase of the correspondence unit, rather than as a theoretical seminar. And it meant, too, that the job of conducting the seminar broadened into more general discussions about the development of correspondence studies there. IEC hopes to continue to be associated with the development of the unit, either by help with editing the courses and with finding short-term expatriate staff to help to get it going, or with more general support services.

Moving further south, we continued to work on the development of sample study kits for use with a course on basic economics run by the Co-operative Education Centre of Tanzania; as with other projects, we hope that this will not only be of value in the country for which it is designed, but also teach us a more general lesson – in this case about the centralised production and use of software. Further south still, we continued to explore possibilities of co-operation in the three southern African countries Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Here, an informal co-ordinating committee, the BLS Correspondence Committee, had come into

existence and in 1973, as mentioned earlier, Michael Young paid them a visit as a Ford Foundation consultant to advise on the future pattern of co-operation. The similarities between the three countries and the as yet modest development of correspondence education there, suggest that there may be scope for them to share resources and facilities.

The guiding principle, then, of our work outside Britain and Mauritius has continued to be the one sketched in our report a year ago – to work towards the establishment of new colleges and to work with others concerned with three-way teaching. Inevitably, as the policy is worked out in detail, it may sometimes seem patchy and even tenuous. At this stage, however, we make no apologies for reaching out tentatively in many directions; hopefully, by the time our next annual report is written an evaluation of our experiences in Mauritius will give us a more precise indication of what our future priorities and capabilities will be.

Chapter 4: BACK AT HOME

Nomenclature always causes problems. In Mauritius we are still having to explain to people that we do not train pilots or (h)airdressers at the College of the Air. In Britain we have to explain that, with one exception, the International Extension College has no students of its own and no courses. (The exception is a correspondence course on writing correspondence courses.) But we make no apology for our name: the notion of exchanging and sharing knowledge and experience is fundamental to what we are trying to do. And it is that concept which lies behind the activities of our central organisation in Britain: the idea that a loose federation of colleges and associates can benefit by their membership of it, and by sharing experience through it. As a consequence, our base in Cambridge has more functions than simply to provide somewhere for our staff to recover in between their visits overseas.

The first function is humdrum but important: to provide basic services for our new colleges. Over the last year it has responded to a steady series of requests from Mauritius, both for information and material relevant to the courses being developed there, and for actual goods. It is simply a great convenience to a new college to be able to call on a resource centre in a country with a good communications system for things as varied as a bulk supply of textbooks, twenty rolls of double-sided sellotape, two videotape recorders and several miles of videotape, and 500g of urease-active meal. We anticipate different, but as varied, requests from Botswana and succeeding colleges.

Information

The second function of our home base, or resource centre, lies not in the realm of things but of information. We found, when we started work, that there was no one place to which one could turn for information about three-way teaching. While correspondence and broadcasting education had expanded fast in the previous ten years, many projects had been set up without the benefit of knowing about parallels or predecessors elsewhere. Similarly, when course writers began to develop their own courses, they often had to do so in isolation, without having seen courses comparable to their own developed by other institutions. This led us to begin a collection of correspondence courses, and of information about them and about broadcast education. This still-growing collection has been of value to inform ourselves, to help other research workers who have come to Cambridge to use it, and to help course writers. We have used courses from the collection as the starting point for our own writers in Mauritius and also as a basis for the training courses there and in Ethiopia mentioned in chapter three. The collection of information and reports on three-way teaching has been put to comparable use — partly to help us in our own development and partly as a resource on which to base publications of our own.

For it was clear that a resource centre, rooted in Cambridge, was useless unless

the information from it was made available where it was needed. To some extent we used the information ourselves in our own work. But, to make it more widely available, we planned two sorts of service. The first is a bibliographical service, which awaits the reorganisation of our ever-expanding collection before we can undertake to issue bibliographical information on a regular basis; at the moment, however, we can and do accept individual requests for off-prints, reference lists and the like. The exact form the service will take is still to be decided and will partly depend on the type of requests received; consequently any suggestions from readers about the sort of service which would be useful will be most welcome.

Secondly, early in 1973, we launched a quarterly series of *Broadsheets on Distance Learning* based on information collected for the resource centre. Their aim is to fill in gaps in the literature of three-way teaching. The first, *Multi-media approaches to rural education* describes and compares a range of projects which have attempted to use distance teaching in non-formal education for adults. The second, *The techniques of writing correspondence courses* is an attempt at an up-to-date account of course planning and writing and is particularly concerned with the integration of correspondence with other media. The third, *Correspondence teaching at university* derives from requests made to us by the University of Nairobi and the University of Ibadan for advice about the best administrative arrangements for correspondence teaching in tertiary education and compares a variety of different patterns. Finally our fourth pamphlet for 1973 on *Technical education at a distance* springs from our own concern to learn – and apply – more about the use of distance teaching in technical subjects, instead of academic ones. The second year's broadsheets in 1974 will, provisionally, cover teacher training by correspondence, the use of three-way teaching in population education, an evaluation report on the Mauritius College of the Air, and the teaching of science subjects by correspondence.

Apart from these publications, and informally providing information on request, we were also commissioned to do two enquiries on correspondence education for the Commonwealth Secretariat whose Education Division has become increasingly interested in the subject. The first was a survey of correspondence teaching institutions throughout the Commonwealth, which we carried out on the same lines as the previous survey done for the proposed African Association for Correspondence Education. Then, early in 1973, we were asked to prepare a paper for the Commonwealth Conference on Teacher Education which took place in Nairobi, about the use of correspondence to train and up-grade teachers.

Finally, IEC staff have during the last year given lectures, undertaken consultancy work, and prepared articles for publication or for presentation at conferences; under the latter heading we should include two papers prepared by Hilary Perraton and Tony Dodds for the founding conference of the African Association for Correspondence Education held in Nairobi in June of this year.

Training

When the National Extension College was founded in England ten years ago, there was no way for its staff to be trained except on the job. (NEC had not got the funds

to send them to America or Russia where there was experience of the right kind.) Even today, while the potential radio or television writer or producer in a developing country may be able to choose from a variety of different courses, formal courses for correspondence educators are rare. Of course in many correspondence projects in the developing world staff have undergone training, but ever since the establishment of IEC, we have been faced with requests for help in training for one particular job, that of the course writer.

We have met this request in two related ways. First, as already described, we have arranged workshops for course writers in Mauritius and in Ethiopia. A further one is planned for Botswana. We ran a similar but shorter course in England for students attending an educational course at the International Co-operative Centre, which is to be repeated next year. But there is a paradox in insisting on face-to-face teaching for correspondence educators. And, just as correspondence teaching is an appropriate technique where there are large numbers of students whose needs cannot be met by conventional means, so there is a place for it where there are very small numbers, but they are geographically widely scattered. And so we have developed a correspondence course for correspondence course writers. It uses correspondence lessons and sound tape cassettes and is designed, not as a theoretical approach, but as a practical job: it guides students through the process of planning and preparing to write their own courses. We have used the course for students in Britain and overseas both as it stands and as a basis for face-to-face sessions on correspondence tuition and it remains available for potential course writers in non-commercial institutions wherever required.

Research

Our interest in research is twofold. First, there are a number of issues in distance teaching, both practical and theoretical, on which more information is needed. We hope, through our own research and by keeping track of other people's, to shed light on some of these. Second, we have seen each of our own projects in terms of action research: we plan to evaluate them as we go along and publish the findings in order to help ourselves and our colleagues elsewhere in the world. So far, we have developed outline plans for research on the Mauritius and Botswana colleges and hope to give more information on these in a later report. For the rest, research – beyond the less rigorous enquiries already being done at the resource centre – awaits further finance.

Chapter 5: BUILDING A COLLEGE

In our first annual report we stressed that it would be wrong for a small independent institution to lay down inflexible priorities or policies. We went on:

> 'Our priorities must be fixed in the main in consultation with the national or international institutions which ask for our support. But our resources will always be limited and our experience, as it grows, will influence the way we choose between different projects which are put before us. The International Extension College is of course open for requests for assistance of any kind from any non-profit institution. Wherever these requests spring from local educational priorities, and wherever we are in a position to carry them out, we will attempt to do so. But where a choice has to be made, we will prefer to support projects and institutions which are combining teaching media and techniques to spread non-traditional non-academic educational opportunities to large numbers of people. This is the field in which we hope to develop further our own particular expertise.'

This comment can still stand as a general summary of our approach.

Our flexibility makes it more difficult to draw a chart of our future progress. Instead, it may be more appropriate to end this report by touching on two central issues with which, inevitably, we will go on grappling. The first is about the appropriateness of our techniques – the marriage of correspondence, broadcasting and face-to-face tuition – for non-formal education. For the sad truth is that most educational experiments using these techniques have been linked to formal educational systems. And it is left to new projects to show how to use three-way teaching for different purposes, or to use it as a way of changing the bias of an educational system.

Educators from Socrates to Freire have stressed the importance of dialogue within education: for the latter it is clear that dialogue is a process in which the educator listens to his students. And yet we know that there are simply not enough skilled educators in the world to set up dialogues with the colossal numbers of potential adult students in the developing world. The challenge before us, with our panoply of glittering communication techniques, is simple enough: can we use them not simply to provide information in an ex-cathedra manner, but to set up an open educational system – open not only in terms of entry but also in terms of being a mutual learning process?

The second issue sounds narrower but it, too, has a bearing on the alarmingly big educational problems the world faces. If an educational system is to speak to the condition of its people, its students, it needs to be based on their interests and hopes. It must therefore be local. But, if we are to take advantages of the economies of scale which remain the strongest economic argument for our use of modern communication techniques in education, then we must use materials that

are produced on a large scale. As we develop our work in Africa, in Britain and elsewhere, we need to define with sharper precision, how far and in what ways we can share teaching materials, as well as expertise, and how far each of us must develop his own. For the world's resources are too few not to be shared.